

Chapter 3 Fun and games

Guess I grew up pretty quick, because I was just coming to size when what do I see running across our yard. A squirrel ! Lordy Lord, you talk about fun. God! I wish I could climb a tree! That sucker even stops and Chuck, Chuck's at me . Man I learned real quick to shut up barking and sneak up on him. I came within a breath of grabbing a chunk of his hide, but he made an Olympic jump to get away. He's still out there, but his near miss done learned him a lesson. He stops on the other side of the fence waiting until he can see I'm outta the way before he comes in. I'm learning to play possum. He just better watch out, but you know, there's just something I don't understand; that miserable squirrel goes bouncing across the yard and zips up a tree. I go bouncing after him and Grand Ma yells " Zippa! Get outta my flower garden!" You'll notice she didn't yell at that squirrel. How come?



How come you didn't yell at that squirrel?

Some body said a dogs disposition has a lot to do with his actions. I don't know what that has to do with catching that squirrel, and staying outta the flower garden, but Grand Ma said, " Zippa, I think it's got to do with conformation. You just don't have it." Well, I don't

know what kinda position or formation I'm supposed to be in to catch a squirrel , I think they just don't know what they're talking about. I agree, I don't have any of that and then Grand Ma explained that I was almost as bad as Grand Pa, couldn't catch a crippled turtle. That didn't make me feel any better, but I've got news for her. I caught a big toad frog and I'll just bet you can't believe how fast they can hop. Take my word for it and Beware! you don't wanna catch one with your teeth. That taste will take the curl right outta your tail. Now, I didn't know them things could be bad for you, especially if you eat one(I ain 't never gonna be that hungry). Grand Pa says some kind are poison and could kill a dog. He says I better leave lizards alone too. Chasing cats is Ok and that's a lotta fun, but I love to play with that toad frog. He's really something else. Always comes around in Grand Ma's flower garden after dark. Yeah, you guessed it " Git outta my flower garden!" to me ,but she never said a word to that toad frog either. I need to quit worrying about Grand Ma yelling at me; I feel a nap coming on.



A good nap beats barking (almost)

Now it was about this time I'm over a year old and a stinking ground squirrel comes to visit. You wanna talk about something that stinks, well a ground squirrel you can smell from a hundred yards away if you're a great huntin dog like me. Not as bad as a skunk, but mighty strong. I knew without a doubt that something was hanging around our place and the way he smelled , I knew Grand Pa wouldn't like it. I chase a lotta cats and I ain't much on them either, but a ground squirrel smell just blanks my mind. I gotta get'em! He came over one afternoon and climbed up under our truck. I knew he was there and ran back to Grand Pa half a dozen times until he realized that I was trying to tell him about ol'rotten stinky and especially that he was in our truck. Of course Grand Pa didn't know what had me so excited, but he knew something was wrong . He began to suspect there was some animal hiding in the truck. I think he thought it might be a field rat and drove the truck around to a faucet and began to spray it all over and under trying to chase that stinker out. It didn't work. I tried to tell him but he decided to give it up and go water the goats. I'll never understand how he could figure watering goats was more important than getting that squirrel.



You Better be scared Stinky!

While he was wasting his time watering, I took it upon myself to get that dirty smelling thing outta our truck. Guess what? That sucker was hiding up on the drive line in a narrow spot I just couldn't get to. I figured he's about my size and I could see he was deathly afraid. I jumped up to get at him not realizing the tangle of lines and controls in that area were protecting him and in my scramble I got hung up. Good God , I was hung by the neck! I couldn't get out! Couldn't breathe

hardly and my back feet just barely touched the ground. I screamed for Grand Pa as I jumped struggling to get my head free. Grand Pa came running which he ain't too good at. A tragedy was in the making and I was gonna be the victim. My legs were getting tired as Grand Pa dropped to the ground and crawled under the truck. With his belly, that wasn't too easy, but he managed to get to me and picked me up in his hands taking the pressure off my throat. I was in a panic mode and fought to get free. Grand Pa talked to me as he tried to free my head, but he couldn't see under the truck and I was trapped in a position that he later said mighta broke my neck if he twisted my head to get free. Desperately I struggled until I finally realized I was safe in his hands and became quiet. Grand Pa was holding me and I knew he loved me. He wouldn't let anything happen to me. I trusted him to fix my problem.

Time went by awful slow and it was later that I learned how the neighbors came to help, but couldn't do anything. Grand Ma had called their son, Lee. He has a belly bigger than Grand Pa, but finally managed to get under the truck and with the help of our neighbors tool box he dropped the drive line freeing my head. That rotten squirrel took off. I was free!. Grand Pa had held me up for the full time. He loves me. This was the scariest time of my life. I hope there ain't no more and if ol'rotten stinky comes back I'm gonna kill him before he gets to our truck.

It was sometime later that I got my first chance at a Gopher. I had seen many mounds of dirt around our place and Lordy, one day I drifted by a hole near our apricot tree and Boom! The Gopher smell came to me strong! You know I don't mean to brag, but hound dogs like me can feel the vibrations of underground animals moving and I immediately began digging. Dirt was flying in every direction and the smell was getting stronger by the second. I knew I had him almost in my jaws when you guessed it " Zippa! Quit the blasted digging!" Grand Ma again. Yeah, fourteen Gopher holes in our yard and you guessed it. She never yelled at them. I think I'm getting a bad case of that Post Traumatic Syndrome stuff from all the No! No's.

One other thing; You know a dog of my caliber has a great memory and I really cain't un-remember that time when Grand Ma took me back to Dracula's place. I was leery of them pretty girls and boy I should have screamed bloody Mary and got outta there.



What you say Nurse? You're gonna take out my what!

This time Dracula's wife helped Frankenstein's daughter do a cutting number on me. I was sound asleep and never knew that I lost anything, but every since then when they mention the opposite sex, I

don't know which one I am. I worry about it some, but it is time for a nap.



I wonder if that Bob Barker of Price is Right was neutered, and he wanted every dog neutralized. Don't know what he was worried about, maybe he was operating Planned Parenthood for dogs or something . You know Grand Pa, maybe I would love a family too, but you never asked.

Time moves along for everyone and I loved my new home. Grand Ma almost every week took a ride on her lawn mower. Boy that sure looked like fun. I ran off and on the thing while she was mowing and finally when she realized I wanted to see where we were going, she picked me up and let me ride on her lap with my feet on the steering wheel. It took a bit before I could keep my balance, but you gotta remember I been watchin NASCAR with Lloyd since I was born. Doin four wheel drifts with Grand Ma was a piece of cake. Dale Earnhardt would have been proud of me, I know the neighbors always stopped to

see us go by. Some of them were jealous I bet, they wanted to ride in Grand Ma's lap too. "Ain't gonna happen Dude! Eat your heart out."



**I sure don't need Disney Land thrill rides
with Grand Ma driving**

This reminds me , I didn't tell you about ol'Shag Nasty yet. You know what a tractor sounds like ,Right? Now just imagine you,re curled up sleeping on the porch on Grand Ma's foot stool, blissfully dreaming about dinner, and suddenly you hear a tractor! It's practically

in your ear and I'm ready to dive off that porch . What the heck is going on? Grand Pa's laughing looking at me and said " Hound dog (he always calls me that) don't get your feathers all wet. Look up here it's just ol'Shag Nasty the male Hummingbird, chasing off any bird wanting his feeder. Don't ask me why, but he's just like some people you meet. Selfish, greedy and nasty, that's why I gave him that name. You don't never want to be like him. Try it and Zip ol'girl you're outta here." You know something. I gotta watch it because I ain't never gonna let another dog, like brother Bean from next door, get my dinner from Grand Ma. He's welcome to that morning dog feed I get from Grand Pa. At least I'll let him eat something and drink from my water bowl; that's a lot more than ol'Shag Nasty will allow. I wish I could tell Grand Ma more about Lyndy's Red Wine. It's the same color as that feed and I'll bet cha , a slug of that and ol'Shag will be flying upside down and be in love with every bird making a run in.